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Comment**Compliance with
SALT treaty
can be verified**

By William E. Colby

It is plain that a major element of the SALT II debate will be the verification process. We can expect cries of alarm on one side and smooth assurances on the other, both proffering platoons of experts, dazzling data, and prognostications of doom if their views are not accepted.

Before dashing headlong into data about strategic systems, however, one must understand the broad principles of verification and the procedures to achieve it.

The *first* and most obvious fundamental is, of course, that we should not "trust" the Russians. Resolve not to "trust" eliminates a whole rather fruitless area of argument. The good feeling expressed in toasts about detente is simply irrelevant to the standard of "adequate verification."

But what does the word "adequate" require? The SALT negotiating process involves three phases. The first is the negotiation within the U.S. government to find a position sufficiently satisfying to all the disparate bureaucratic and political factions that it will not be sabotaged from within before it is even presented. The second phase involves negotiation with the Russians themselves, which requires our negotiators to state clearly what obligations have been assumed. We have had too many "verifications" of alleged violations of provisions which the Soviets never accepted. Approved For Release 2005/01/12 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000400390086-5
"unilateral understanding" may have been about them. The third phase in-

volves negotiation by the administration with the Senate, for ratification.

The question of adequacy can easily be translated into whether any violation of the agreement, however minute, can be identified. But we must remember we are dealing with a political document, an agreement between sovereigns, and that there is no impartial judge with jurisdiction over both parties.

In this situation the *second* fundamental of the verification process arises: Its purpose is to protect us, not to win legal points. The true standard, then, is whether we can verify the agreement adequately to protect ourselves, a different question from whether we can detect every single action by the other side that might constitute less than the most precise compliance with the terms of an agreement. Of course it involves the question of whether the Soviets could secretly develop and deploy a weapons system they could unveil in such a stunning action that we and our allies would be shocked into the realization that we were helpless before them. But short of such feats, there are lesser steps the USSR could take to reveal an equally dangerous political will or a trend toward repudiation of the agreement and abandonment of its restraints, and do this without alerting the sleeping hare until the tortoise is well over the finish line of effective superiority. This second fundamental, then, insists that "adequate" verification provide sufficient warning that we can see trends and indications of violation sufficiently to protect ourselves.

But here the *third* fundamental of "adequate verification" arises, and here again we must take care to avoid legal pettifoggery, demanding evidence beyond a reasonable doubt to support a conviction for violation of the agreements. There is no disinterested judge to whom we must take our case: Our evidence can be of a more worldly character, sufficient to alert us to protect ourselves. We can act on well-founded suspicion, on ambiguous behavior, or on developments in related fields that so change the atmosphere that restraint seems unlikely. We can, as we have done, insist on certain rules of interpretation, such as the "once-tested, always counted" resolution of whether or not weapons contain MIRVs. Our evidence need not be limited to what will support a complaint before the World Court, but need be only sufficient to stimulate us to seek reassurance or rally our people to react.

The *fourth* fundamental concerns the series of options available for our reaction in case of suspicion of a violation. These options can include (a) advising that we will reciprocate by releasing our restraints in a limited sector chosen to correspond to an observed violation by the other side, (b) a demand for rectification, (c) an insistence upon a positive showing that our suspicion is in error, (d) a negotiation to clarify ambiguities, or (e) a warning that our suspicions are aroused and that we will be sharply attentive to any further indications of violation.

But these four fundamentals must rest upon a practical base, which is our capability of knowing what is transpiring in such secrecy on the other side.

Our public has become aware of the revolution in our intelligence capa-

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